

News Release



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US Labor Department's OSHA encourages major retailers to provide crowd management measures to protect workers during Black Friday, other sales events

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is encouraging CEOs of 14 major retail companies to take precautions to prevent worker injuries during Black Friday and the holiday season's other major sales events. Toward that end, OSHA has sent a letter and fact sheet on "Crowd Management Safety Tips for Retailers" to the CEOs.

In 2008, a worker was trampled to death while a mob of shoppers rushed through the doors of a large store to take advantage of an after-Thanksgiving Day Black Friday sales event. The store was not using the kind of crowd management measures recommended in OSHA's fact sheet, which is available online at https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/Crowd_Control.html.

"Crowd-related injuries during special retail sales and promotional events have increased during recent years," said Assistant Secretary for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. "Many of these incidents can be prevented by adopting a crowd management plan, and this fact sheet provides retail employers with guidelines for avoiding injuries during the holiday shopping season."

The fact sheet provides employers with recommended elements for crowd management plans. Plans should include having trained security personnel or police officers on-site, setting up barricades or rope lines for pedestrians and crowd control well in advance of customers arriving at the store, making sure that barricades are set up so that the customers' line does not start right at the entrance of the store, having in place emergency procedures that address potential dangers, and having security personnel or customer service representatives explain approach and entrance procedures to the arriving public.

OSHA also recommends not allowing additional customers to enter the store when it reaches its maximum occupancy level and not blocking or locking exit doors.

For a copy of the letter sent to the CEOs and a list of the retailers they represent, visit <http://www.osha.gov/ooc/blackfridayletter.pdf>.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA's role is to promote safe and healthful working conditions for America's men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, outreach and education. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

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